

long, spreading, pectinato-pinnate, compressed; the pinnæ very narrow, linear and acute. When magnified, the apices of the pinnæ are found to be frequently minutely forked in a divaricate manner, like some *Cladoniæ*. The lower part of the stalk of each frond is naked for about half an inch, and covered with linear scales or processes, like those of the creeping stem.

I propose the following name and character for this very beautiful Alga:—

Caulerpa superba, frondibus ovato-oblongis, ramulis numerosis pectinato-pinnatis undique obsitis.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE X.

Fig. 1. A frond of *Caulerpa superba*, natural size.

Fig. 2. A portion of a pinna.

Fig. 3. Apices of ditto, magnified.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

Geodephaga Britannica. By J. F. DAWSON.
London: J. Van Voorst, 1854.

To investigate a new country, and to draw conclusions from facts and objects, concerning the *novelty* of which (as contrasted with what we ordinarily experience) there can be no question, however interesting and important may be the results arrived at, is a comparatively easy undertaking; but, to search for information along the beaten highways of science, to aspire to advance knowledge in paths which have been explored by others, and to gain additional points of light by destroying the error which has been permitted gradually to accumulate, is a laborious task which no one can accept without becoming a public benefactor in his particular line. And hence it is that we hail the appearance, more especially, of those works the professed aim of which is to simplify rather than to discover,—believing that the greatest boon which can be conferred upon any given subject is to separate the true from the false, and so to pave the way for the advance of the former, and, as a necessary consequence, the annihilation of the latter. Such has been the primary object of the author of the publication now before us; and therefore, whatever may be its intrinsic merits, we must plead guilty to a certain *à priori* prejudice in its favour.

But, if we turn to the pages of this Monograph, and compare the results arrived at with those of the standard works which have gone before it, we shall perceive that it has not been taken in hand wantonly; but that it is the fruit of much close observation and practical research, and that it may in fact be looked upon as the most successful attempt which has been hitherto made to clear up the difficulties of nomenclature, and the confusion which has arisen as regards the species themselves, in so large a section of the British Colcoptera.





Having applied himself for many years past, almost exclusively, to the study of our native *Geodephaga*, it is not surprising that Mr. Dawson should have found himself compelled, not only to create many changes in the general classification (so as to embody, as far as seemed desirable, the more recent views of the continental entomologists), but also to sweep away a vast number of "species" (so called) which had been proposed at a time when differences were less philosophically inquired into than now, and when almost every modification which savoured in any degree of permanency was at once considered as *specific*.

Regarding the *arrangement* put forth, it appears to be that which is now universally acknowledged throughout Europe, and which was first adopted in this country by Mr. Westwood,—from whose invaluable 'Introduction to the Modern Classification of Insects' the characters have been mainly borrowed. Mr. Dawson has however transposed the third and fourth subfamilies of Mr. Westwood (in accordance with the system at present received), by which means the *Trechii* (of the *Harpalides*) are brought into direct contact with the *Bembidiades*,—a step which is certainly desirable, on account of the gradual manner in which these groups merge into each other both in structure and habits.

The *genera* also have been treated according to the law which the implicit followers of Erichson invariably endorse; by which means a large array of names which have been long familiar to the ears of British naturalists have been entirely cancelled. Thus, for instance, the *Anchomeni* are made to embrace *Platynus*, *Anchomenus* proper and *Agonum*; *Pterostichus* includes *Pœcilus*, *Abar*, *Pterostichus* proper, *Platysma*, *Adelosia*, *Steropus*, *Omascus*, *Argutor* and *Platyderus*; and the *Bembidia* are composed out of *Cillenum*, *Tachys*, *Oeys*, *Philothus*, *Peryphus*, *Notaphus*, *Leja*, *Lopha*, *Bembidium* proper and *Tachypus*,—as formerly understood.

There can be no doubt whatever that the major part of these amalgamations have become, in the advanced state of the science, absolutely necessary,—the numerous species which have been brought to light since the days of Bonelli, Megerle, Ziegler, and Leach having so far supplied connecting links between groups once apparently isolated, as to render it impossible that the latter should be any longer upheld. Yet we may question whether Mr. Dawson has not carried this principle somewhat too far; and, whilst endeavouring to simplify, whether he has not rejected more than (especially in a local fauna) is altogether desirable. In the details of their oral organs the whole of the *Carabidæ* display so great a similarity *inter se*, or rather shade-off into each other by such imperceptible gradations between their extremes, that the *tendency* which various clusters of them possess to assume modifications of form which attain their maximum only in successive centres of radiation, must oftentimes be regarded as *generic*, if we would not lose sight altogether of the natural collective masses into which the numerous species (however gradually) do unquestionably distribute themselves. It is possible indeed that, as our knowledge advances and new discoveries take place, we shall